



July 20, 2007

Barry Paulson
Acting Forest Supervisor, Bitterroot National Forest
1801 North 1st Street
Hamilton, MT 59840

Chuck Oliver, District Ranger
Darby Ranger Station
P.O. Box 388
Darby, MT 59828

RECEIVED

JUL 25 2007

Ravalli County Commissioners

RE: Opposition to Proposed Lost Horse Quarry

Dear Supervisor Paulson and District Ranger Oliver,

This letter serves as my strong opposition to the proposed re-opening of the Lost Horse Quarry on the Bitterroot National Forest. Re-opening the quarry would severely limit recreational enjoyment of this unique area, and create serious safety concerns for all users of the Lost Horse corridor.

The climbing community has no doubt been vocal in pointing out the extraordinary quality of both rock and routes in or adjacent to the Lost Horse Quarry. This is a world-class climbing area and one of the best in the State of Montana. Re-opening the quarry would ruin the climbing aesthetic and create a dangerous situation for climbers accessing existing routes.

Furthermore, the Lost Horse corridor provides a unique point of access for all users of the Bitterroot National Forest. It is the only road proximate to a population center that allows vehicular access to the high country of the Selway-Bitterroot. Indeed, it is the only artery leading directly into the heart of the Wilderness' high elevation backcountry. As such, the Lost Horse corridor is a heavily used area for numerous recreational pursuits: Hiking, fishing, four-wheeling, hunting, bouldering, and photography, to name but a few.

The industrial traffic caused by re-opening the Lost Horse Quarry would greatly increase the risk of accidents on this heavily used, winding and narrow roadway. Moreover, such industrial traffic would add to congestion, making it more difficult for all recreational users to access the high country of the Selway-Bitterroot.

Surely, there is accessible rock, capable of being mined, elsewhere on the Bitterroot National Forest. I strongly urge the Forest Service to locate any such quarry in an area

without the one-of-a-kind features of the Lost Horse corridor. This is a special area that should be managed for its unique recreational attributes.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

/s/Gavin Ricklefs

cc:

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